

arcade express

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COLECO RECAPTURES DONKEY KONG CARTS

Coleco's new cartridge for the Atari VCS, "Donkey Kong", has proven to be unplayable on Model #2600 of the VCS. The cartridge works fine on new consoles, but it turned out to be unusable on older versions. (You can tell the difference by the location of the difficulty switch. Older models have the switch in the front of the console.) Even though roughly 90% of the cartridges would represent no problem to the consumer (since most VCS consoles are the newer models), Coleco decided to recall all "Donkey Kong" carts from distribution. "It was just an oversight, and requires only a minor modification in the game to make it work," says Coleco spokesman, Mike Katz. The company felt it was preferable to make the change in all cartridges, rather than waiting for dissatisfied individual customers to return unusable games to the retailers. Mike Katz estimates that the recall will affect tens of thousands of game carts, but promised the corrected cartridges should be back on the market the second week in August. After that, there'll be no problem.

ASTROCADE SUES ATARI, COMMODORE

Astrocade has filed a patent infringement action against Atari, Inc. and Commodore Business Machines, Inc. Astrocade holds exclusive rights to Bally's home videogames, and the lawsuits involve two patents owned by Bally that Astrocade claims were exclusively licensed to Astrocade for the home market. They cover a basic video display technique known as "bit mapping". Astrocade maintains this technique is used by Atari and Commodore in their products in violation of the patents.

Bally refused to join in the litigation as co-plaintiff, so is therefore involved in the suit as an involuntary plaintiff. The suit, thought by Astrocade to involve millions of dollars, seeks an injunction against Atari and Commodore, and an accounting of damages.

When contacted, Atari spokesmen said that company is not worried, and Charles S. Pual, Sr. Vice President and General Counsel, styled the suit "frivolous" in an interview in Leisure Time Electronics' CES Reports.

Commodore spokesman, Kit Spencer, said, "We feel there are no particular grounds for this suit", but declined further comment.

FISHY GAME GETS RENAME

An agreement between Games By Apollo, Inc., and Universal City Studios has resulted in renaming "Lochjaw", the new game from Apollo. Universal Studios felt that title would produce confusion with the films "Jaws" and "Jaws II". "Lochjaw" has therefore been renamed "Shark Attack". All advertising and publicity for the original title is being recast to suit the new moniker.

Arcade Express asked Apollo President Pat Roper if the Universal Studios suit was a setback for Games By Apollo. "I didn't much care for it, because I didn't feel it had to happen. We were not infringing, and our attorney's opinion was that we would win the lawsuit. But we are too busy to get involved in litigation against Universal. This is not to say that if something like that comes up again we wouldn't get involved with litigation because we may. I don't want to set a precedent. But at this stage, it was just easier to change the name," he explains.

"Shark Attack" involves a diver threatened by sharks while trying to gather sunken treasure from a shipwreck. With a scenario like that, "Shark Attack" is probably the best title Apollo could have devised, anyhow.

L.A. REJECTS ARCADE TAX The Los Angeles City Council proved itself one legislative body that can't be panicked by the irrational campaign anti-arcade critics are now waging in many American cities and towns. The council defeated a proposal that would have taxed arcade operations a whopping \$250 for each machine in their establishments. Reason for the ruling: such a tax would unfairly penalize the videogame industry.

VIDTEC NAME PHASE-OUT PLANNED The brand name "Vidtec", seen on the scrolling shoot-out "Space Jockey", will soon be relegated to no more than a minor role, if that. The company, which operates as part of the Fisher-Price division of Quaker Oats, will henceforth emphasize the name "U.S. Games". The next cart-ridge from the company will be "Towering Inferno", a firefighting action game in which the player must race through a burning skyscraper to save residents and douse flames.

ENTERTAINMENT GIANT ENTERS VIDEOCAMEDOM Cabriel Industries, the toy and game division of CBS, Inc., has formed a new unit, called CBS Video Games. CBS, Inc. and Bally Manufacturing Corp. have an agreement which allows CBS Video Games to manufacture, market and develop home video games for the Atari VCS and the Sears Video Arcade.

The first two games, licensed from Bally/Midway, are going to be wowzers: "Gorf", one of the all-time top coin-op games, challenges the gamer to battle robots, ships, lasers and torpedos in a multi-mission space fandango. "Wizard of Wor", the popular dungeon game, calls on the arcader to face monsters in constantly changing mazes.

Both games will be available for Christmas. Industry sources are being close-lipped about future releases, but predict spectacular hits coming in the near future.

SINCLAIR SPECTRUM DEBUTS IN U.K. Sinclair's joint venture with Timex, the TS-1000, is making headlines in America because of its ultra-low pricetag. Even before the TS-1000 takes off here, the British company has introduced its next generation machine in its homeland. The Sinclair Spectrum is a 16K unit that features a superior calculator keyboard and high resolution (256 x 175 pixels) graphics. The unbelievable part is the price: roughly \$300, with a 48K version pegged about \$80-\$100 more. Also on tap is an inexpensive disk drive with a 100K capacity.

BEEFSTEAK CHARLIE COES COBBLER ROUTE Beefsteak Charlie's, the highly successful restaurant/tavern chain, is installing the leading coin-op videogames in selected locations on an experimental basis. What's so experimental? The games are free! For opening night at the 68th Street & Broadway location in New York City, all games were set on unlimited free play, though tokens may soon be used if the owners are happy with the results.

The innovative chain will use the lure of the games to increase attendance, hence up the take per night. Since the games are free, the new nightspots do not fall under New York City's ludicrous anti-arcade laws.

Opening night was a big success, with patrons busily playing nine machines, including "Tempest", "Defender", "Zaxxon" and "Tron". More locations are gearing up, with more games planned for each.

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ATARI LOWERS 5200 PRICE Atari is still fine-tuning its roll-out strategy for its new top-of-the-line videogame system which is now dubbed the Atari 5200 (as opposed to the VCS, which carries the designation Atari 2600). The Sunnyvale manufacturer has chopped the wholesale price to \$185, more than \$100 less than originally intended. This should make it possible for retailers to discount price the 5200 as low as \$219 this Christmas.

PROF SCORES GAMES "INNOCUOUS PLAY" "Videogames are probably the most innocuous way kids have of spending their free time", says Dr. Susan McHale, Professor of Development Psychology at Pennsylvania State University. She went on to say, "At worst, they're harmless play, offering neatly-packaged arousal and instant gratification." The professor praised the games for developing hand/eye coordination, as well as perseverance and concentration.

COLECO ROLLS VIDEOGAME LINE Coleco began shipping cartridges for the Atari VCS at the end of July. "Donkey Kong", "Venture" and "Carnival" are the first releases, followed by "Zaxxon" and "Turbo" sometime in September or October. "Mousetrap" and "Smurf" will follow in time to be on the shelves before the Christmas buying season.

Shipment of cartridges for the Intellivision also began in August. "Donkey Kong" and "Carnival" are the first releases. "Turbo", "Mousetrap" and "Zaxxon" will follow in September and October.

Coleco is also shipping cartridges for ColecoVision. By Christmas, there will be 5 games for Intellivision, 7 for the Atari VCS, and at least 15 for ColecoVision.

STUDENTS TRADE GOOD GRADES FOR GOOD TIMES Malibu Fun Centers has completed its test of an incentive program for students, grade school through college, at all 40 Malibu Fun Centers, including Malibu Grand Prix, Castle Golf 'n Games, and Showboat. Each report card "A" gained the student 5 free tokens, and each "B" was worth 2 tokens, for final grades at the end of 1982's spring term. The program ended in June, after final grades were reported. Students were allowed to bring their report cards by the centers in the afternoon or on weekends. (Malibu strictly enforces regulations barring school-age kids from gamerooms during school hours.) Over 200 tokens per day were given away at each location.

"The program produced a lot of good will with teachers and parents, as well as with students. Some parents told us that their kids were buckling down and hitting the books a little harder because of this," says Peter Frey, spokesman for Malibu Centers. "This was a trial balloon, but it was so successful that we will probably repeat the program during the next school year."

FOX GAMES PICKS PREXY Frank O'Connell has been named President of Fox Video Games, Inc. This is the new company formed by Twentieth Century Fox Film Corp. for their line of video cartridges for the Atari VCS. Frank's past experience in the industry should be of great advantage. O'Connell was formerly a Senior Vice President in charge of sales and marketing for Mattel's Electronics Division.

K-BYTE UNVEILS THREE ROM CARTS FOR ATARI 400/800 The outstanding success of "K-razy Shoot-out" has proved that good games on cartridge are attractive to owners of Atari computers, even when priced significantly higher than comparable programs on disk or tape. K-Byte, the company that scored with the popular maze-shoot-out title, is bringing three more games to market. "K-Star Patrol" (a scrolling shoot-out), "K-razy Antics" (a maze-chase) and "K-razy Critturs" (an invasion game) are the titles.

KIDSTUFF PDI, which has already secured a beachhead in the kideo (kid video) software market with its fairytale adventure "Sammy the Sea Serpent", will soon introduce a two-game cassette cut from similar cloth. "The Adventure of Oswald" stars a little boy who falls down a hole and must be helped out again by the gamer. "Oswald's Golden Key", the other game, encompasses the same young hero's search for the object mentioned in the title.

ATARI DEFENDS TURF WITH AD BLITZ The battle for the Atari VCS-compatible cartridge market is heating up nicely as the holiday gift season approaches. To prevent becoming overshadowed by all the independent software vendors, Atari is stepping up its national TV effort, starting with commercials for "Defender" and "Berzerk" now hitting the home tube from coast to coast. Atari will reportedly spend \$35 million during the second half of 1982 to back its cartridge line.

TOMY INTRODUCES SYSTEM Tomy Toys has jumped onto the videogame bandwagon with a new programmable game system. The unit, compatible with Nipponese home television, was introduced at the Tokyo Toy Fair. It will be available to Japanese merchants by the end of August.

WILLIAMS COES ON MOON PATROL The newest coin-op from Williams Electronics is "Moon Patrol", a race against time in which arcaders try to patrol uncharted moonscapes in a lunar vehicle. Gamers manipulate a tank using a joystick for speed control, a jump button to leap ground-level traps, and a trigger button to fire missiles straight up and directly ahead of the tank. In the beginners course, mammoth boulders must be blasted or leapt, and space ships, flying saucers and UFOs have to be repelled. Worse yet, their bombs create more craters which the tank must vault. Later in the course, land mines and alien tanks add new terrors. The champion course features still more dangerous confrontations that demand all the skill the arcader can muster.

A GOOD TIME TO BUY A MASTER COMPONENT Mattel Electronics is offering a \$50 rebate for all purchases of the Intellivision Master Component between August 16 and September 18, 1982. The rebate will be a cash refund, rather than a certificate good toward future purchases.

Consumers are asked to mail in proof of purchase and the in-package purchase registration card, together with a certificate available from magazines, newspapers and participating dealers. The deadline for mailing the rebate requests is October 3.

ATARI OPENS RESEARCH LAB Atari has established a new research laboratory in New York City, for development of microprocessor-based products. The new lab will study advanced products for Atari, and do joint work with other Warner Communications subsidiaries. Steven T. Mayer will head the staff of computer programmers and scientists which will work on projects for all the Atari divisions (coin-op, computer and home games). Mayer, with Atari since the company started in 1972, was one of the inventors of the Atari VCS, as well as the Atari 400 and 800 home computer systems.

The company expects the new research lab to significantly advance Atari's expertise in the field of electronic entertainment and computation, but declines at present to make specific predictions of what will be produced by this special laboratory.

MATTEL IN THE CHIPS Mattel Electronics accounted for 25% of the net sales of the entire company in 1981, according to figures contained in Mattel's annual report. Even more dramatically, the electronics division accounted for a full 50% of the operating profit of Mattel during the fiscal year.

NEW V.P. FOR ATARI Atari announces the appointment of Ted Voss as Corporate Senior Vice President. Voss previously served with Polaroid, but now will be in charge of advertising and marketing for Atari. He stepped into his new role on July 12. Good luck, Ted!

MATTEL CHANGES PERSONNEL Mattel Electronics has announced some people-moves within the company. Pete Pirner has been named Senior Vice President of Marketing, and Wendell Johnston is now the Vice President of Marketing for Mattel Electronics Portable Electronic Products. Both Johnson and Pirner were formerly in Mattel's toy division.

In a lateral move, Bill Gillis has been reassigned. His new position is Vice President of New Business Development. Mr. Gillis was formerly V.P. of the Electronics Division. Mattel declined to comment on his new duties, saying only that it was "hush-hush" stuff!

ATARI BIG EARNER Warner Communications has released its second quarter earnings figures. It probably won't surprise anyone to learn that Atari accounted for 59% of the operating capital for this corporation. And, that ain't hay!

COIN-OP PAY OFF Williams Electronics, Inc., the coin-op company, has declared a 10¢ dividend to shareholders at the end of the second quarter this year. Williams is securely in the black, which is the reason for this payoff. Must be all those quarters I spent playing their classic game, "Defender".

PROGRAMMER REPROGRAMS HIS CAREER Larry Kaplan, one of Activision's original design team, has left that company. Sources indicate that Larry, who had been working on designs for games for the Atari VCS right from the beginning, had grown tired of the limitations of that system and started looking for a machine that would be more exciting to program. Nothing he found really struck his fancy, so Larry is planning to build his own super system. So far, this is a tentative project and it's uncertain what may develop. But, if anyone can do it, Larry Kaplan's the one to bet on!

T.I. ANNOUNCES REBATE Texas Instruments has just taken a giant leap into the ongoing retail price war by announcing a \$100 rebate on the TI-99/4A personal computer. This brings its sheet price to just under \$200.

PROGRAMMER MOVES FROM SEARS TO ACTV. Dick Lehrberg, head videogame honcho at Sears for several years, is crossing to the supplier's side of the table. Credited as one of the men most responsible for the phenomenal sales of the Atari VCS through Sears, Dick is moving on to head software development for Activision, the company which continues to scoop up the top talent in the field.

SEGA/GREMLIN UNVEILS NEW COIN-OP THRILLER "Zektor", the latest coin-op game from Sega/Grenlin, is described by company sources as an ultimate test for space game enthusiasts, with all the action, speed and sound effects of a movie space adventure. The arcader must recapture eight cosmic cities under the evil dominion of alien robots. Each city is defended by a menacing male or female robot with robotic army. First the face of the robot appears on screen, verbally daring the gamer to retake its city. Then the arcader must defeat waves of attacking fighters and Roboprobes, and Moboids that function something like moving landmines. As many as seven aliens can attack the player ship at one time, by ramming or with lethal Zizzers. "Zektor" gets more difficult with each round, and grants extended play if the eighth robot is defeated.

THE HOTSEAT

Reviews of New Products

- RATINGS: 1-4 The item has serious flaws.
 5 An average game that does what it promises.
 6 Better than average.
 7 A good game, but maybe not for everyone.
 8 A very good to excellent game
 9 An outstanding, state-of-the-art game.
 10 Pure gold and about as good as a game could be. A rare rating.

KEY: The information which heads each review follows the same simple format. First comes the name of the item, then its classification and if it is a home arcade software program, the system or systems with which it is compatible. Finally, there is the manufacturer's name.

PITFALL/Videogame Cartridge (Atari VCS)/Activision

This may well be the best adventure game yet produced for the VCS. As Pitfall Harry runs through the jungle, it is up to the gamer to keep the on-screen hero from falling into one of the chasms which block his route. If Harry falls in, he descends to a subterranean cavern where he sometimes finds treasure. Most of the time, though, your electronic explorer ends up as dinner for some cave-dwelling dreadful. The play action is extremely varied, suggesting that "Pitfall" will wear well through repeated gaming sessions. The animation is good, and the graphics are fully up to the usual high standard Activision maintains. Rating: 8

SPACE CAVERN/Videogame Cartridge (Atari VCS)/Games By Apollo

Like the first in the series, "Space Chase", this is also squarely in the invasion game genre. The setting this time, however, is a cave on an alien planet. The arcader commands three spacesuited crewmen, available one at a time, and tries to shoot down the creatures which hover near the ceiling of the vast cavern or scurry out of the side caves. An unusual control scheme lets the astronaut fire at shaggy marsupoids charging from the left or right edges of the playfield with the mere flick of a joystick handle. Some of the visuals, such as the way your spaceman fries when a monster's electrical blast hits home, are excellent. Others, such as the rendering of the flying electrosauri, are a little less slick. This is a very tough game, best suited to experienced, skilled players who find ordinary "Space Invaders" just a lark. Rating: 7

TRON/Coin-Op/Midway

The first major game from Midway's new in-house design squad is excellent in and of itself -- and promises a steady stream of topflight games from this quarter. Actually, "Tron" is four mini-games in a single cabinet. The arcader can play four times, trying any combination of the four scenarios he or she desires. Completing the grand circuit of all four successfully allows the player to start again at a high level of difficulty. There's a little something for everyone here: a brick-bashing game, a steering/avoidance contest, a maze-shoot using tanks, and a blast 'em up with the excitement level of "Berzerk" or "Robotron". All are fairly easy to conquer during the first round, but it takes real gaming mastery to run the gauntlet a second and third time. Rating: 9

CRAZY CLIMBER/Stand-Alone/Bandai Electronics

This is an inviting-looking game that fails to live up to its considerable promise. The cabinet is a beautiful gold and black with the playfield tilted at a comfortable angle. Animation of the climbing man, the flying condor and its droppings, the antagonist and his deadly flowerpots, and the constantly opening and closing windows is also noteworthy. The problem is that the unit just doesn't play right. The twin joystick controllers are so unresponsive that the player can seldom count on the climber's hands going in the desired direction. Rating: 3

ELECTRONIC STRATEGO/Stand-Alone/M.B. Electronics

The traditional "Stratego" board has been sensitized, and all conflicts between the two warring armies are decided by the computer, so no one has to expose the identity of his concealed pieces. Mines are secretly hidden around the board to blast the unwary, while a probe button scouts out enemy personnel from a distance -- all electronically. Stirring music counterpoints the battle. This is a great new version of an old classic. Rating: 8

AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLER/Stand-Alone/Bandai Electronics

Direct traffic for a six-mile radius around the airport, as planes arrive and depart from East and West on four flight paths. Control the air speed and altitude for takeoffs and landings. The very unusual unit looks like a radar screen, and demands real concentration to master. For those who enjoy complex juggling of a lot of variables. Well done. Rating: 7

TRACKBALL CONTROLLER/Videogaming Accessory/WICO

The coin-op control system giant, having already shaken the home arcade field with its super-quality joysticks, has taken the next logical step by introducing a trackball controller. Like its commercial arcade counterpart, this version allows movement in eight directions and can speed or slow on-screen objects. It also includes an action button for games which include both fire and movement. The Trackball is available for a variety of home arcade machines, including Atari (72-4545), Odyssey² (72-4555), TRS-80 (72-4550) and Apple II (72-4521). It is premium-priced at \$69.95 list (\$10 more for the Apple-compatible model). A control device as marvelous as this is certainly worth the cost to any true electronic game-lover. Rating: 9

VECTREX/Stand-Alone Programmable Videogame System/CCE

This is the unit that finally unshackles the videogame from the family t.v. set, because it comes equipped with its own vector graphics monitor. The 9-in. screen can only produce black and white images, but it features the delicate linework and three-dimensional perspective found in such coin-op hits as "Asteroids". The controllers are of excellent quality with a small joystick and a row of four buttons. To take some of the sting out of the lack of color, CCE has created a special overlay to go with each game. Some of these are so well-done that it's almost possible to forget you're not looking at a full-color screen. Outer space themes predominate among the games, though there is an excellent version of "Scramble" and a fine driving contest, "Hyperchase". Vectrex comes with one game, "Mine Storm", resident in the machine, and its certainly one of the most playable freebies ever offered in this fashion. Rating: 9

WATCH THIS SPACE!

In the next issue, Arcade Express will have reviews of more of the hottest games. We'll be reviewing more coin-op games, cartridges for all the home arcade systems, and for the Vectrex stand-alone programmable system. Arcade Express will take a look at some of the newest computer game programs, plus telling you all about the newest stand-alones on the market. Don't miss it!

ELECTRONIC GAMERS
BILL OF RIGHTS

Gamers must be protected from unscrupulous persons who are only in this industry for the money. Therefore Electronic Games has proposed a Bill of Rights, with a set of standards for hobby-

ists and manufacturers. Following is the proposed Electronic Gamers' Bill of Rights:

1. Every game, disk, and ROM cartridge should perform as specified by its advertising and packaging.

2. Every game should be original. That is, the design should be more than an unlicensed copy of an existing electronic game.

3. Every computer game package should state the required memory capacity needed to play the game, the type of control input (joystick, paddle, keyboard or some combination) used by the arcader, and the system or systems on which the game media will run. In addition, there should be a photo, illustration or diagram of the principal video display somewhere on the package.

4. Every electronic game should come with a complete, well-organized set of instructions that cover every essential element the player needs to know.

5. The publisher of any electronic game should stand ready to replace a newly purchased copy which is unplayable due to faulty workmanship.

6. An electronic game should be completely free of programming errors and should not require repair or modifications by the gamer (unless such modifications are implicit in the design of the game and are spelled out clearly on the package).

7. Every coin-operated electronic game in a commercial amusement center should be exactly as shipped by the manufacturer, modified only by the manufacturer or a licensee. In other words, independently produced extra boards which distort the original play action and raise the odds against the player should not be used.

Electronic Games invites comments both from gamers and from representatives of all segments of the electronic gaming industry.

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